

‘Cost of Living,’ Fountain Theatre

by F. Kathleen Foley

The essentials: Winner of the 2018 Pulitzer Prize for drama, Martyna Majok’s slice-of-life play takes us behind the scenes of two “differently abled” individuals and their caregivers. Unemployed long-haul trucker Eddie struggles to cope with the fallout from his estranged wife Ani’s disastrous accident, which has left her quadriplegic. Wealthy, privileged John, who has cerebral palsy and requires special care, develops a fragile bond with his aide, Jess, a first-generation have-not whose labors for her most basic needs ironically mirror John’s physical struggles. When their stories unexpectedly collide, “Cost” comes full circle, ending on a delicate and cathartic hint of hopefulness.

Why this? Defying easy sentiment and conventional expectations, Majok shatters stereotypes with her characters, who are drawn with such truth and specificity that they evoke a frisson of voyeuristic unease. Showered with awards and accolades over the decades, the Fountain has become the West Coast home to world-class playwrights, such as renowned South African master Athol Fugard and the Fountain’s own founding member, Stephen Sachs. Scoring the West Coast premiere of Majok’s extraordinary drama is yet another in a long line of coups for this venerable company, while veteran director John Vreeke’s involvement also bodes well for this production.

Details: Fountain Theatre, 5060 Fountain Ave., Hollywood. 8 p.m. Fridays; 2 and 8 p.m. Saturdays; 2 p.m. Sundays; 8 p.m. Mondays. Ends Dec. 16. \$25-\$45. (323) 663-1525. www.FountainTheatre.com